The Social Network:

Narrative Theory as a Vehicle for Musical Performance

By

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Abstract

The relationship between music and narrative is an established topic for debate in music scholarship. Narrative acts as an effective means of interpretation at every stage of musical performance, from teaching to listening. Narrative pedagogy has become a common practice in music studios primarily through the legacy of Arnold Jacobs's pedagogy, but by tracing the fundamental concepts of narrative theory, narrative pedagogy becomes more insightful and encompassing. Teachers can approach teaching through narrative from several different aspects, from collaborative storytelling to analytical listening. Through this approach, teachers may encourage a constructive learning environment that fosters independent, original musical ideas.

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Chapter 1: Principles of Narrative Theory

The question of whether or not music can express a narrative is an intriguing prospect that has been the subject of much debate in recent musical scholarship. Many composers and critics believe that if music strives to represent something external, it might conversely detract from its acoustic integrity. But the question of whether or not music intrinsically represents a narrative is itself arguably irrelevant since listeners may well rely on fictive modes of sense making regardless of any composer's original intention. Thus as the psychotherapist Donald E. Polkinghorne writes, "the recognition that humans use narrative structure as a way to organize the events of their lives and to provide a scheme for their own self-identity is of importance for…personal change."[1]

Susan McClary defines absolute music as "the notion that some instrumental music is self-contained, innocent of social or other referential meanings."[2] While music may seek to remain independent of external influences, Eric F. Clarke observes that autonomous listening is rare.[3] People tend to listen to music in a very pragmatic manner, often employing it as a social facilitator or possibly an exercise stimulus. Although autonomous listening might be rare, Clarke recognizes its unique strengths:

> If heteronomous listening has a revelatory potential by virtue of the worlds that it brings together, there are others who have argued that it is the capacity of music—listened to autonomously—to set itself against the world that endows it with such transforming powers.[4]

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[1] Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany, New York: State University of the New York Press, 1988), 178.
[2] Susan McClary, "Narrative Agendas in 'Absolute' Music: Identity and Difference in Brahms's Third Symphony," *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 327.
[3] Eric F. Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 144.
[4] Clarke, 146.

Arnold Whittall similarly describes autonomous music as a product of the world that "transcends the world's context."[5] Yet instead of being immune to a narrative perspective, perhaps absolute music actually provides a blank canvas that allows the listener to create a narrative voice that has no outside prompting. Listeners in short can formulate stories drawn principally from their own imaginative realms in order to explore subjects relevant to their personal experiences. This customizable musical experience allows the listener to utilize fully the sense-making capacity of narrative. Literary scholars and musicologists have devised several methods to describe and mediate this relationship between music and verbal narrative. These methods take common literary elements, such as story, plot, and narrative agency in order to consider how they might be interpreted in a musical composition.

One influential appraisal of musical narratology was advanced in 1990 by Jean Jacques Nattiez. Nattiez suggested that music can represent something external, but only opaquely because it lacks a clear subject/predicate relationship.[6] The listener, in other words, cannot identify specific characters or story lines without some kind of external prompting, such as a descriptive title or program notes. Nattiez drew this conclusion after an experiment in which he asked 300 children to write a story describing a piece none of them had heard before (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Paul Dukas). In spite of the large sample size, no two children composed the exact same story.[7] Although none of the children's stories identified the same characters or events, they did contain similar plot structures. In short, the children recognized similar significant points in the music,

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[5] Arnold Whittall, "Autonomy/Heteronomy: The Contexts of Musicology," *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 98.
[6] Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?" trans. Katharine Ellis, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115/ii (1990), 241.
[7] Ibid., 247.

even if these moments represented something different to each child. For example, the majority of children recognized a large crescendo in the middle of the piece.[8] While the piece clearly appeared to be communicating a gestural sequence, the children could not imagine a consistent scenario for this climactic event. Nattiez thus went on to claim that although no unanimous plot could be posited, an impression of temporal development was established.[9] Music was indeed capable of providing a plot outline even if it did not transmit the precise details of the story.

While subject matter and individual agency are not concrete variables, music does provide a schema of behavior that can be followed throughout a piece.[10] Byron Almén agrees with Nattiez's conclusion by saying that verbal cues are not necessary in music because the listener infers the structural process. Almén argues that music has the ability to convey a mood or sentiment and relays clear structural points against which the indistinct plot can be mapped.[11] Carolyn Abbate by contrast takes Nattiez's analysis of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* one step further by tracing the appearance of themes throughout the piece in an attempt to find clear correlations between these components and verifiable narrative plot points.[12] Through repetition and development, these themes convey palpable narrative connotations, but once again, the subject of each component remains indefinite.[13] Abbate claims that the music lacks prosopopoeia, or the capacity for personification, that gives any of the details of perspective that are relayed in a simple

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[8] Nattiez, 247.
[9] Ibid., 248.
[10] Ibid., 250.
[11] Byron Almén, "Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Analysis," *Journal of Music Theory* 47/I (2003), 4.
[12] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 33.
[13] Ibid., 40.

story.[14] For this reason, music cannot inherently portray simple elements of a narrative such as agency and spacial or temporal location.

Given music's inability to communicate such specific orientation, Abbate claims that the human inclination to narrativize is the most important aspect of musical narratology since listeners effectively free associate in order to fit the plot archetype of a piece.[15] However, an alternative approach to interpreting music as narrative is presented by Fred Everett Maus. Instead of treating music as a deficient discoursive medium, Maus instead regards its syntactical sequence as a basis for anthropomorphic characterization.[16] For example, Maus describes the last movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 9 in E major, Op. 14, No. 1, as containing a "gnarled progression" and "venturesome arpeggiations."[17] While notes and harmonies cannot actually contain these worldly motivations, by describing music with adjectives Maus humanizes these purely musical elements.[18] Personifying each individual state equates music with its existential function.[19] The adjectives that Maus uses are derived from everyday actions and imply that music can function in an analogous fashion. Complications or irregularities in music are not coincidences, but rather behaviors motivated by previous musical actions.[20] Nevertheless, no character is understood to be performing these musical actions; rather any piece unfolds as a sequence of significant events evocative of human volition. Lawrence Kramer claims that this strategy is merely "a rhetorical strategy meant to

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[14] Abbate, 41.
[15] Ibid., 47.
[16] Fred Everett Maus, "Music as Narrative," *Indiana Theory Review* Volume 12 (1991), 15.
[17] Ibid., 12.
[18] Ibid., 12.
[19] Ibid., 14.
[20] Ibid., 19.

humanize the impersonal agency that we hear in music."[21] Kramer describes the narrator as "frustratingly impalpable" because the listener can understand the message expressed in the music, but cannot identify who is expressing that message. In this way, Kramer describes the narrator as a "shadow" whose influence is clearly heard in music, but who never makes an appearance in the narrative.[22] Maus argues that this shadow condition does not discredit music as a narrative medium. Kramer agrees, concluding that while narrating voices may never be fully concrete, so long as we understand the music's message, "they will be voices that speak credibly, and musically, through ours."[23] In short, the listener acts as the narrator by guiding the pathways of the story in conjunction with the plot archetype.

These fundamental principles of narrative theory are relevant to the performer and contribute to musical performance by acting as a mechanism to channel diverse musical experiences to students. A teacher can encourage students to generate original musical performances by structuring a curriculum based on narrative pedagogy, from a single lesson through the entirety of a degree. The following chapters will present the conceptual underpinning of narrative pedagogy and its practical application in a private music studio.

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[21] Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 119.
[22] Ibid., 119.
[23] Ibid., 121.

Chapter 2: Perceiving Music

Thus far, musical narrativization has been presented predominantly as a mode of listener response rather than an intrinsic discursive property of any compositional style. Broadly considered, there are advantages to this type of listening, which Eric F. Clarke discusses in his book *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning.* Clarke claims that narratives provide the structure within which we listen and understand music.[24] Creating stories gives the listener a framework within which to understand and process sound, thereby making it less abstract and hence more concrete and personable.

One of the fundamental concepts of Clarke's approach is the idea that perception in any scenario implies action. He states that, "the ecological approach emphasizes the structure of the environment itself and regards perception as the pick-up of that already structured perceptual information."[25] As humans, we are constantly trying to make sense of the environment around us, and Clarke emphasizes that perception is an active task.[26] For example, if we hear an unfamiliar noise, we turn towards its perceived source to identify its likely significance. After exploring the stimulus, we then react to it in some way, thus changing our initial perception. If the noise is too loud, we may cover our ears, diminishing the sound. Through this process, we have identified the sound, reacted to it, and made it manageable to our ears. This cyclical process of perception-action-new perception is a crucial determinant regarding our understanding of the acoustic world around us.

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[24] Clarke, 15.
[25] Ibid., 17.
[26] Ibid., 19.

This is an important concept in understanding narrative listening because abstract formal settings tend to discourage the reactionary aspect of this dynamic.[27] To truly understand the brush strokes or textures in a piece of visual art, we all have the urge to reach out and touch it, but art galleries typically require that viewers merely observe artworks at a distance. The same concept is true in classical music venues. While at the symphony, spectators are expected to sit quietly in a darkened space, responding only with regulated applause. Dancing or singing along are frowned upon. Essentially, formal concert etiquette minimizes all of our senses except for listening, which in turn limits our ability to interact with the sonic materiality of music.

Clarke even goes so far as to say that formal concert etiquette, particularly that which surrounds autonomous music, has a quasi-religious character.[28] Absolute music is thus immune to outside influence and hence its freedom from environmental fluctuations, much like religious values, is considered transcendent. Concert protocol could thus be described as ritualistic in view of its formal presentation. In *The Recording Angel*, Evan Eisenberg argues that this might be the very reason that recordings continue to grow in popularity while live concerts seem to be diminishing.[29] When listening to a recording, listeners can control their environment and react however they deem necessary. If they want to dance in their living room or sing along in their car, there are no social restrictions that frown upon this behavior. In private, the listener can react to the music however he or she wishes.[30]

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[27] Clarke, 20.
[28] Ibid., 130.
[29] Evan Eisenberg, *The Recording Angel: Music Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2005), 34.
[30] Ibid., 32.

The reactive phase of perception is not only inhibited by formal concert settings, but also by the perceived intangible nature of music. Music is often described as intangible because one cannot touch or feel sound. We can hold scores or sheet music, but Eisenberg says that the scores "aren't music; they just represent it. The music itself is sound."[31] Elaborating on this point, James Gibson argues that music embodies "modes of stimulation, or ways of conveying information, for any individual to perceive, however abstract."[32] By perceiving the stimuli in music, listeners can react to its symbols, making them as concrete as speech. Clarke argues that musical conventions are engrained in our culture, making them as much a part of the environment as any other feature.[33] They have become cultural regularities, and as such we are equipped to interpret them.

Since our traditional methods of reaction are restricted, listeners are culturally engrained to turn to narrative in order to understand and interact with these abstract impressions. Clarke discusses music's narrative power as follows:

> A significant component of music's capacity to engage and transform the listener lies in its power to temporally structure the sense of self. By virtue of its highly organized temporal but non-spatial structure, music provides a virtual environment in which to explore, and experiment with, a sense of identity.[34]

Listeners use narrative to explore different existential dispositions through music. If a listener is grappling with an emotional loss, they may listen to sad music to help them channel and sublimate their feelings. Another possibility is that listeners want to experience an emotion outside of their everyday experience. Donald Polkinghorne notes this trend in broader terms when he recognizes that humans define and transform

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[31] Eisenberg, 11.
[32] James J. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 26.
[33] Clarke, 39.
[34] Ibid., 131.

themselves through narrative.[35] Our human nature seeks out narrative constantly in our daily lives, from reality television shows to routine conversations. We use those narratives to experience new emotions or to come to terms with situations in our own lives. Clarke observes that music does particularly well in facilitating this need because it, "affords peculiarly direct insight into a limitless variety of subjective experiences of motion and embodiment—real and virtual."[36] Between music's countless genres and its ostensibly abstract nature, it is all but impossible to deny that listeners create narratives that answer to their emotional and intellectual impulses.

Not only is music a vehicle for narrative interpretation, but a listener's narrative interpretation often determines a piece's perceived musical value. Clarke supposes that, "A listener's sense of meaning in music is powerfully bound up with his/her experience of being subjectively engaged or alienated by music."[37] If a listener has a strong emotional reaction, whether positive or negative, he or she is more likely to consider the piece as musically worthwhile.

Identifying motion in music is a critical element of narrative listening and perceiving meaning in music.[38] Motion implies action to the listener in both a metaphorical and literal sense. The most obvious motion in music is that of the human performer.[39] Some kind of vibration is occurring to produce the physical sound, whether it is a singer's vocal chords or the strings of a violin. But in addition, the performer is moving their body in some way to facilitate the musical sound. A singer moves their lips to form the syllables of the lyrics or a trombonist adjusts their slide to create a certain

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[35] Polkinghorne, 178
[36] Clarke, 90.
[37] Ibid., 89—90.
[38] Ibid., 63.
[39] Ibid., 64.

pitch. In a very literal way, motion is happening in order to create the desired sound. Motion also occurs metaphorically in music. Clarke claims that, "sounds can specify a virtual domain that both abides by and stretches or defies the normal laws of physics."[40] When motion exists in music, listeners hear life, but instrumental music is vague enough that the listener can transform that life. The motion can represent something different to each listener.

This perceived motion is what sets the parameters for the plot archetype as defined by Anthony Newcomb. It provides the structure around which the listeners can fashion their own story. Clarke recognizes some common trends concerning what listeners perceive to be motion in music. He notes that complex polyphony is usually viewed as the movement of external objects, while a homophonic texture supporting a solo voice usually implies self-motion.[41] The more voices involved and the more complex the counterpoint, the more motion is implied. Clarke also notes that, "changing patterns of attack points, such as timbre, dynamics, and pitch, can specify motion in virtual space."[42] Changing the intensity of dynamics or varying the speed of rhythms and pitches creates the illusion of motion created in music. By increasing or decreasing tension, music creates the peaks and troughs that constitute the sonic landscapes through which perceived plot archetypes move.

Clarke concludes that motion in musical meaning is neither real nor metaphorical, but rather fictional.[43] Motion draws the listener into the music, leading them to engage with it in a personal, yet fictional way. Nicholas Cook argues that, "music almost always

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[40] Clarke, 70.
[41] Ibid., 76.
[42] Ibid., 73.
[43] Ibid., 89.

has a multimedia quality to it, and musical meaning is always the consequence of a context that is wider than the sounds in themselves."[44] Notes in and of themselves embody a relational purpose, but by assigning a sequence of notes a narrative context, music can be made to become something much more than just itself.

However, more factors contribute to narrative interpretation than just a sense of motion. Another consideration is the music's subject-position, which Clarke describes as "the way in which music solicits, demands even, a certain closely circumscribed response from the listener by means of its own formal operations."[45] Music can control some elements of the listener's intended narrative by suggesting certain musical contexts. For instance, by utilizing the elements of a gigue, music can imply both a dance and a time period for the narrative. Music can also suggest different perspectives through rhythmic pacing and harmonic inflection. As Nattiez argues, music cannot communicate specific storylines, but just as it can provide the template for a story, so it can also imply the story's mood.

Clarke also mentions that the performer can mediate the subject-position.[46] By making certain interpretive choices in performance, performers can manipulate how the listener perceives the music. The performer can linger on an unusual harmony for longer than written or slow down a phrase for dramatic effect. This level of nuance contributed by the performer can directly influence the listener's perception. In short, by interpreting and translating their own narrative sense of the music through performance, the performer can directly influence the listener's narrative formation. By this logic, the performer is much better suited for the traditional perception-action cycle than the

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[44] Clarke, 88.
[45] Ibid., 124.
[46] Ibid., 122.

listener. The musical product is under the performer's control because "perception and action are in dynamic relation with one another."[47] The performer can perceive the sounds that they are playing, interpret them, and react to them in order to alter their projection. They can interact with music in a much more complete way than the audience.

Nicholas Cook claims the performer's role in mediating the narrative process is even stronger, suggesting that music performance acts as a vessel for understanding society.[48] Cook claims that musical performance is too often perceived as a necessary means to reproduce the musical text.[49] Instead of treating the text as a "work of art" and the performer as a vehicle for that work, the focus should remain on musical performance as an event and musical text should act as a vehicle for performer expression.[50] Cook uses Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to illustrate his point. Lawrence Rosenwald defines the work not as an idealized masterwork, but rather as "existing in the relation between its notation and the field of its performances."[51] Beethoven's score thus exists to facilitate musical performance, while repeated performances revitalize the work and maintain its relevance in our society. In short, Cook claims that "real-time performance routinely leaves not a few, fragmentary memories…but rather the sense that we have experienced a piece of music, an imaginary object that somehow continues to exist long after the sounds have died away."[52]

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[47] Clarke, 150.
[48] Nicholas Cook, "Music as Performance," in *The Cultural Study of Music,* edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York, New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 212.
[49] Ibid., 204.
[50] Ibid., 205-207.
[51] Rosenwald, 62.
[52] Cook, 208.

To facilitate this understanding of musical performance, Cook encourages an ethnomusicological approach to music analysis.[53] Rather than attempting to explain compositional structure in a purely formal sense, ethnomusicology instead focuses on understanding music in the context of a larger culture.[54] Jeff Todd Titon observes that this approach encourages ethnomusicologists to "make and know music as lived experiences" and participate firsthand in the performative stage.[55] Cook stresses that this approach "seeks to understand the performance of a particular piece in the context of the total performance event, encompassing issues of program planning, stage presentation, dress, articulation with written text, and so forth."[56] Mistakes by the performer are not viewed as ruining the performance, but rather act as a semantic feature of the act of performing. Observing how music is influenced by non-musical traits of performance is part of the process. Music performance is a balance between respecting and reflecting music's historical intent and generating new social meaning.[57] Cook emphasizes the necessity for a shift in how we analyze music, claiming social commentary is not encoded within music; rather musical texts act as "scripts in response to which social relationships are enacted through performance."[58]

[53] Cook, 211.
[54] Ibid., 211.
[55] Ibid., 211.
[56] Ibid., 212.
[57] Ibid., 212.
[58] Ibid., 213.

Chapter 3: Narrative Pedagogy

If narrative plays an important role in music's performance and perception, how do we teach students to optimize this narrative power in their playing? Although some students may be more inherently musical, narrativity must be a teachable skill. Teachers can train students to perform musically by teaching through narrative pedagogy, a popular teaching strategy in other disciplines, particularly those that involve customs and ethics.[59] By examining how other disciplines utilize narrative, we can draw conclusions on how musicianship can be taught effectively.

As a discipline, religious study commonly uses narrative in a didactic capacity. Traditionally, religion uses stories as a means of illustrating difficult or complex principles, such as Biblical parables.[60] Yet Benjamin Espinoza believes that narrative's role in religious pedagogy goes beyond that of parables alone, defining narrative pedagogy in Christianity as "a process of telling and re-telling our own stories, both negative and positive, allowing interaction with the Christian narrative to become a life-giving and life-shaping influence on our personal narratives in order to become the agents of change in the world."[61] Just as in music, there is an emphasis on the forming and transforming power of narrative, but Espinoza focuses on the speaker rather than the listener. Through interaction with the narrative in the storytelling process, the storyteller interacts with the narrative first hand and experiences its transforming powers most acutely.[62]

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[59] Leroy Little Bear, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 81.
[60] Benjamin D. Espinoza, "The Christian Story and Our Stories: Narrative Pedagogy in Congregational Life," *Christian Education Journal* Series 3, Volume 10, no. 2 (2013), 433.
[61] Ibid., 433—434.
[62] Ibid., 433—434.

Espinoza encourages students to tell their stories in the present tense rather than the past tense.[63] Speaking in the past tense, or through "lived stories," implies a narrative that is frozen and whose fate is fixed. Stories that exist in the present tense, or "living stories," imply a narrative that is fluid and in the process of being formed.[64] One of the major arguments against musical narratology is that music does not contain a past tense, which supposedly inhibits its ability to engage in discourse.[65] But according to Espinoza's narrative pedagogy, music's lack of a past tense might enable narrative rather than inhibit it. By keeping stories in the present tense, music's narrative voice is strengthened because it is developing in the moment and hence easily adaptable for every listener.

Espinoza also emphasizes that teaching through narrative should encourage and define a community of story sharing.[66] Rather than teaching through lecture, students should be encouraged to tell their own stories in an effort to visualize and convey themselves as actors in their own story. Espinoza emphasizes that, "we are the stories that we tell about ourselves," and through storytelling, students develop a sense of identity.[67] Even if the stories we tell are partly fictional, they expose a level of truth about our nature. Narrative also defines these communities that we create.[68] As humans we connect and build relationships with others who have similar experiences, and we realize those experiences through sharing narratives. In her article on narrative's role in gender identification, Eluned Summers-Bremner equates telling a story from your past to

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[63] Kyoung-Hee Shin, *Narrative, Semoya Space, and Christian Education: From Lived Stories to Living Stories* (Ph.D. Diss., Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 2011),7.
[64] Ibid., 7.
[65] Maus, 24.
[66] Espinoza, 435.
[67] Ibid., 436.
[68] Ivor F. Goodson and Scherto R. Gill, "Narrative Learning and Living in the Community," *Counterpoints* Volume 386 (2011), 147.

giving someone a gift.[69] The story you are telling is personal and represents a part of you, and sharing that story symbolizes a gesture of trust. Through exchanging stories, people are entrusting each other with part of their lives and personalities, and it is this level of trust that builds communities.

Cathy Coulter believes that this collaborative effort is the key to teaching through narrative and that by working together to create and analyze a story, a discourse is created that makes the story living and relevant to the creators.[70] Collaborating allows the student to realize other perspectives, as well gain awareness and articulate their own point of view.[71] Amidst these narrative collaborations, Goodson emphasizes that all opinions should be equally valid, including that of the teacher.[72] The teacher should guide the plot archetype being created, but not dictate the story. While interacting through narrative, it is important that the student and teacher respect each other and build a relationship based on "deep listening."[73] The collaborators must engage in attentive listening to gain true understand of other perspectives, as well as display empathy and interest to others, a key to enabling further collaborations.[74]

Coulter proposes that narrative teaching allows students to draw connections between their lives and their studies in the classroom.[75] Narrative enables students to create settings where their beliefs can be implemented in real life scenarios and provides an outlet to experience these new beliefs as part of the greater timeline in their own

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[69] Eluned Summers-Bremner, "Waving, Not Drowning: Personal Narratives, Feminist Pedagogy, and the Gesture in Psychoanalysis," *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), 654.
[70] Cathy Coulter, Charles Michael, and Leslie Poynor, "Storytelling as Pedagogy: An Unexpected Outcome of Narrative Inquiry," *Curriculum Inquiry* 37, no. 2 (June 2007), 108.
[71] Coulter, 108.
[72] Goodson, 143.
[73] Ibid., 138.
[74] Ibid., 138-139.
[75] Coulter, 105.

development. In Coulter's study, she encouraged students to brainstorm how they would implement their new views on bilingual education in their own classroom and theorize how these views would benefit students. Through these discussions, students drew conclusions about their own education, as well as their shortcomings and strengths.[76] By developing their opinions in narrative, the students were able to realize and articulate their own opinions in order to better prepare themselves for the classroom. This example shows the important role that narrative plays in the relationship between "telling" and "doing."[77] A student may have acquired knowledge and technique in the classroom, but it can be difficult to translate that knowledge into a practical skill. Narrative acts as that conduit between symbolism and action.[78] This process of self-actualization allows students to conceptualize their ideas and apply principles from the classroom in a practical way.[79]

Coulter believes this narrative process encourages students to develop original thought.[80] Barbara Finkelstein states that, "through the revelation of individual lives and circumstances, biographers can probe the sources of creativity, the origins of new sensibilities, and the forming of original thought."[81] The process of applying knowledge in a personal way enables the student to offer a new perspective on the material. Through practice, the student can eventually create narratives and draw these conclusions without

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[76] Coulter, 111-112.
[77] Ibid., 120.
[78] Goodson, 152.
[79] Ibid., 152.
[80] Coulter, 120.
[81] Barbara Finkelstein, *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* (New York: Garland, 1998), 47-48.

the aid of the teacher, becoming independent thinkers that bring fresh ideas to the material, distinguishing themselves from the status quo.[82]

Narrative pedagogy is a proactive process for both the student and teacher.[83] The teacher must be engaged in each step of the process, from transmitting information to creating and executing an effective narrative. Shoshana Felman, for instance, argues that, "teaching…must…testify, make something happen, and not just transmit a passive knowledge, pass on information that is preconceived, substantified, believed to be known in advance."[84] In their role as collaborator, the teacher should guide the student through the exploratory process, not just impart information to them and thus expect the student to make connections based on that knowledge.

All of these pedagogical concepts are relevant to the music classroom and can be applied in the private lesson studio. In fact, concepts of narrative theory have been relevant in low brass pedagogy and performance long before much of the material discussed in the previous chapters was developed, particularly in the teachings of the renowned brass pedagogue, Arnold Jacobs. Jacobs is credited with revolutionizing brass pedagogy in the late twentieth century, focusing on what he referred to as "song and wind," which he described as a "very important [concept] to communicate a musical message to the audience."[85] Adolph Herseth, the legendary principal trumpet player from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, describes this theory by saying, "you have to start with a very precise sense of how something should sound. Then, instinctively, you modify

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[82] Summers-Bremner, 672.
[83] Goodson, 152.
[84] Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.
[85] Brian Frederiksen, *Arnold Jacobs: Song and Wind*, ed. John Taylor (Gurnee, Illinois: WindSong Press Limited, 1996), 139.

your lip and your breathing and the pressure of the horn to obtain that sound."[86] At the heart of this pedagogical technique lie narrative implications that changed how brass players approached their instruments.

Arnold Jacobs was most famous for his tenure as tubist in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1944 to 1988 and as the tuba professor at Northwestern University.[87] His principal concept of "song and wind" directly relates to the narrative concept of performance described in Chapter 2. He emphasized the musical product, believing that musical concepts facilitated the physical technique of the performer. One of Jacobs' most famous quotes is that musicians should, "study the product, not the method. Mentalize music by making statements, not by asking questions."[88] This technique helps the performer achieve a transcendent state and encourages students to locate their own narrative voice.

Jacobs not only encouraged narrative performance, but also used narrative as a way of teaching new concepts to students. While describing the music making process, he explained technique that might be unfamiliar to most students by comparing them to more familiar concepts. Just as music is made more concrete through narrative listening, Jacobs makes musical concepts concrete through narrative metaphors. For example, he compares sound production on an instrument to the process of a computer. When we give the command to a computer to open a program, we do not consider all of the intricate mechanics that must happen within the computer to fulfill that task. We merely make a command and wait for the product to appear. Jacobs claims that the musical process is

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[86] Jim Doherty, "For All Who Crave a Horn That Thrills, This Bud's for You," *Smithsonian* 25, no. 6 (September 1994), 94-103.
[87] Frederiksen, 28.
[88] Ibid., 139.

very similar. We should not think through every muscle that creates the sound, but rather envision the product and trust our bodies to adapt to create that sound.[89] Not only is this a concept in narrative theory, but he also describes this concept through the narrative metaphor of enactment. By relating something unfamiliar to familiar concepts, Jacobs allows the student to understand the process.

Jacobs also encouraged students to find musical meaning in narrative. While he taught the unfamiliar through familiar comparisons, he discouraged monotony in music making through the exploration of unfamiliar experiences. He encouraged students to incorporate "strangeness" into their practicing, which he describes as "the sudden withdrawal of familiar ways of doing things."[90] He believed that "familiar patterns of playing often perpetuate familiar problems," and so encouraged students to play in extreme environments, such as playing after jogging around the hall or singing a piece without their instrument at all.[91] By immersing themselves in unfamiliar situations, students were obliged to adapt and avoid conditioned responses to music. This concept of strangeness parallels the purpose of narrative listening in music. By exploring a side of ourselves that is strange or new through narrative, we realize a new perspective on our own self-image. We avoid monotony by imagining ourselves in new situations, and music is the vehicle for that realization. Similarly, Jacobs is encouraging students to practice with this concept of strangeness in order to increase focus and realize new perspectives in performance.

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[89] Frederiksen, 108.
[90] Ibid., 144.
[91] Ibid., 145.

Perhaps most tellingly, Jacobs described instrumental musicians as "storytellers of sound. Unlike singers, who use words, we use phrase, emotion, and other such tools."[92] Jacobs made a clear distinction between performers who play beautifully, but mechanically, and those who convey a message.[93] By this logic, Jacobs seems to define great musicianship as the ability of the performer to convey a narrative voice to the listener. A musical performance is not characterized by clean technique or beautiful sound, but rather by the clarity of the performer's communicative persona.

Towards the end of his life, Jacobs describes the narrative power of music during a lecture at the International Brassfest in Bloomington, Indiana:

> It is very important that we study emotions in music, style characteristics in music, the art form of music. You can make people laugh, you can make people cry, you make people want to enlist in the Army, you can help them by the moods that the music can be associated with. You have all sorts of abilities to communicate and tell a story through sound.[94]

Jacobs encouraged musicians to study acting in order to reinforce their ability to communicate non-verbally with an audience.[95] He believed that an acting class was a way to practice presenting ideas to an audience through reinforcing the importance of embodied involvement. It provided yet another way that music students could practice performing away from their instrument and outside of their familiar responses in order to better their skills.

Jacobs used some of the specific techniques described in other disciplines when teaching students to perform through a narrative perspective. Espinoza encouraged

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[92] Frederiksen, 139.
[93] Ibid., 139.
[94] "Arnold Jacobs, Lecture. At International Brassfest, Bloomington, Indiana, June 1, 1995," transcriber Joe Hughes, ed. Brian Frederiksen, Part 1, 2, 3, *Atlanta Brass Society Journal* 7, no. 1 (Fall 1995), no. 2 (Winter, 1996), no. 3 (Spring, 1996).
[95] Frederiksen, 139-140.

students and teachers to collaborate to develop a story that speaks a level of truth about themselves, while Jacobs was known for telling his students, "I am not telling you what your musical message should be, [I am] only saying that you must have one."[96] Jacobs encouraged students to create and relay their own story through the parameters set forth by the music.

One of Jacobs' early students, Abe Torchinsky of the Philadelphia Orchestra, describes Jacobs' influence on his career as follows: "I really feel that I owe my career to him…[He was a] great influence in my life and I consider [him a] special friend."[97] As Coulter emphasizes, one of the most important roles of narrative pedagogy is that of creating an environment of trust. Jacobs brought this mentality to his own private studio, often referring to himself as a "therapist" to his students.[98] The nature of one-on-one teaching for an extended period of time leads the private lesson instructor to often act as a mentor in the lives of their students. Through sharing stories and creating a narrative voice together, the teacher can develop that mentor relationship with a student. Music making can be a very personal and vulnerable process, and through sharing life experiences the teacher can create an environment where the student can work outside of their comfort zone.

Goodson described one of the primary advantages to teaching through narrative pedagogy as being the way in which the narrative process acts as a practical step between symbolism and action for the student.[99] In the private music studio, this means narrative gives meaning to the technical skill that the student has acquired and acts as the step

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[96] Frederiksen, 154.
[97] Ibid., 89.
[98] Ibid., 91.
[99] Goodson, 152.

between playing notes and creating a musical performance. Jacobs summarizes this concept clearly:

> The act of going to school, of acquiring knowledge as a youngster, is receiving, not sending. It has to be turned around so that performance is always being able to tell a story in music, even at the most elementary stages.[100]

That being said, narrative pedagogy is utilized most effectively in music teaching when technique is not an obstacle for the student. Autonomous performance is reached when the performer is wholly focused on relaying their narrative voice. The technique should facilitate the narrative, but too often it inhibits the narrative. Narrative pedagogy is based on the principle that the student has already obtained the knowledge and is applying it through narrative, but that principle remains a moot point if the student lacks the underlying holistic awareness. Jacobs identifies this as "paralysis by analysis."[101] If a performer is too focused on the technique required to play the music, the narrative will not be clearly translated. Jacobs encouraged students to "de-emphasize the mechanics of self-analysis and simply play music."[102]

Clarke also identifies two elements essential facilitating narrative interpretation: clarity and motion. He concludes that, "the structure perceived by a listener should correspond as closely as possible to the composer's compositional strategy, and allowing therefore for the recovery of structures of which the composer might have been unaware.[103] The student and teacher collaborate in creating a story, but the teacher should be mindful that the story respects the music's plot archetype. The technique or

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[100] Frederiksen, 93.
[101] Ibid., 142.
[102] Ibid., 143.
[103] Clarke, 140.

interpretation of the student should not obscure either formal design or thematic content, for example, but rather highlight them.

The music teacher is also responsible for ensuring that the symbolic story becomes action in the performance, meaning that the musical gestures accurately represent the narrative. Cook claims that successful musical performance is achieved when the listener's focus is drawn to the unique aspects of the performance, and the performer's ability to highlight these features successfully fosters engaged listening and critical interpretation.[104] In order for the listener to have the opportunity for autonomous listening, music and narrative must be clearly organized and transparent to the listener, and often the performer must exaggerate and emphasize musical gestures so as to enhance clarity.[105] Highlighting these changing patterns contributes to creating the motion that Clarke described as essential to narrative listening.[106] Cook defines the art of musical performance as lying "largely in nuance—in making notes longer or shorter than they are written, or in shaping their dynamics, articulation or pitch."[107] Even a single note with long duration can signify motion through varying vibrato speeds and dynamics. By emphasizing these elements through the use of dynamics, stress, and rubato, motion can be synthesized in otherwise stagnant music.

By utilizing these narrative methods, a student can develop a distinct musical voice. Eventually, the student should be able to invent and implement effective narrative scenarios without the assistance of the teacher. By teaching through narrative pedagogy,

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[104] Nicholas Cook, "Beyond the Notes," *Nature: International Weekly Journal of Science* 453 (June 26, 2008), 1187.
[105] Clarke, 139-140.
[106] Ibid., 73.
[107] Cook, "Beyond the Notes," 1186.

the teacher in turn hopes to educate performers who can create fresh interpretations centered on engaged and imaginative music making.

A Case Study by way of Conclusion

If Barbara Finkelstein is correct in her deduction that storytelling is a process that engenders original thought, then narrative pedagogy is a vital avenue for creative thinking. By cultivating innovative performance, students are encouraged to expand and develop our field. Cook likewise describes musical performance as keeping music "alive," as if music continues to exist and evolve even after the sounds have ended.[108] Compelling musical performances generate ideas and conversations, allowing music to evolve through narrativity.

The tuba repertoire has already experienced positive change and growth through the influence of narrative. One of Arnold Jacobs's greatest contributions to the low brass community outside of his groundbreaking pedagogy was his championing of Ralph Vaughan Williams's Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra. Jacobs did not premiere the work, but performed it no less than six times between 1968 and 1978, as well as recording it in 1977 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.[109] Jacobs was critical of how composers traditionally wrote for the tuba "as an accompanying instrument, which means it is a limited challenge that will produce a limited player, unless he learns to overcome that."[110] In fact, the Vaughan Williams's Concerto was the first piece of solo literature written for the tuba, despite the previous 120 years of its existence.[111] Whitney Balliett recognizes the importance of the concerto when she states that, "Vaughan Williams…broke a vicious circle: no one had written pieces for solo tuba because there were none to point the way, none to suggest the marvelous tonal and lyrical possibilities

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[108] Cook, 208.
[109] Frederiksen, 40.
[110] Ibid., 166.
[111] Matthew Joseph Sbalcio, *Ralph Vaughan Williams's Tuba Concerto: Its Conception, Performance, and Significance to the Tuba Repertoire* (D.M.A. Diss., Arizona State University, 2010), 81.

of the instrument."[112] Through his Concerto, Vaughan Williams altered both the audience's and composer's opinions on the potential for the instrument.[113] I will argue that he succeeded in changing the tuba's perception by giving it a fresh, narrative voice.

Michael Jameson describes the concerto as an "unusual composition [in which] the tuba is given an entirely new identity, and is allowed to demonstrate its remarkable agility in the outer movements, and its sound lyricism in the beautiful romanza that lies at the heart of the work."[114] While the technical facility required for the outer movements of the concerto was certainly revolutionary for the instrument, the middle movement is generally viewed as the most radical movement in the work. This movement also most clearly reflects the compositional voice that Vaughan Williams was so well known for, that which derived from English folk song.

In an effort to revitalize an interest in English music, Vaughan Williams had gained recognition early in his career through his collection of native songs.[115] Vaughan Williams subsequently began incorporating folk song material into his original compositions in an effort to save them from extinction, and they quickly became the primary facet of his compositional style. Paul Affelder describes the concerto's "Romanza" as having "something of the English folk song character so often associated with Vaughan Williams's music. It affords the solo instrument an opportunity to display a warm, songful side of its personality that is not often shown in other works."[116] It is this melodic voice that helped redefine the tuba's perception in the literature.

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[112] Whitney Balliett, "Goodbye Oompah," *The Instrumentalist* 49, no. 1 (August 1994), 46.
[113] Harvey Philips and William Winkle, *The Art of Tuba and Euphonium* (Miami: Summy-Birchard Inc., 1992), 140
[114] Sbalcio, 105
[115] Ibid., 27.
[116] Paul Affelder, "Notes on the Program," *The National Orchestra Association* (December 11, 1973).

After examining Vaughan Williams's collected folk song corpus, researchers can find no connection between the "Romanza" and a specific folk source.[117] Yet while the melody appears to be an original composition by the composer, one cannot deny its singing quality. This singing style is usually accompanied by lyrics, and lyrics imply enunciated meaning. Furthermore, by titling the movement "Romanza," Vaughan Williams empowered the tuba with a specifically narrative rather than a purely lyrical voice. Jack Sage describes romanzas as rooted in story-songs, "often dwelling on a single situation taken from a story, the effect being rather more often a heightening of the dramatic tension than of lyricism."[118] By choosing to feature the tuba in this generic role, Vaughan Williams thus empowered the tuba with a narrative theatrical voice, ushering the instrument from the back row to center stage through a distinctly dramatic vehicle. One could argue that with Vaughan Williams's background in English folk songs, he was the ideal composer to liberate the instrument, and that any another composer may not have been as successful. Nevertheless, it is clear that the work marked a shift in the tuba's perception as a solo instrument.[119]

By analyzing different recordings of Vaughan Williams's "Romanza," one can better understand how to utilize and foster these narrative principles in musical performance. Three recordings are chosen for consideration here: those by Arnold Jacobs (1977), Patrick Harrild (1992), and Øystein Baadsvik (2008). But before comparing different performances of the work, the plot archetype must be established.

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[117] Sbalcio, 133.
[118] Jack Sage, "Romance," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed April 7, 2015, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/subscriber/article/grave/music/23725.
[119] Sbalcio, 139.

Having identified significant narrative cues within the music, different dramatic interpretations of these key points can be compared.

Table 1. Analysis of Ralph Vaughan Williams's Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra

Measure Numbers	Form	Key Center	Narrative Cue
1-8	Introduction	D Major	Vocal anticipation
9-26	A	D Major	First vocal utterance
27-34	B	D Minor	Accompaniment develops the opening melodic motive from A in the parallel minor
35-47	C	A Minor- E Minor	Music moves quickly through minor dominant keys and new melodic ideas
48-56	B'	B Minor	B returns in string bass and moves to tuba, but in relative minor rather than parallel
57-79	A'	D Major	Extended Form. Soloist tries to return to D minor as in the opening A section, but orchestra remains in D major.

Three significant points in particular can be labeled as vital to the narrative structure of the piece. The first occurs from measure 35 to 48 where new melodic material is introduced and the solo part is voiced in a minor key (Example 1). In addition to this shift to a minor key center, the rhythm of the melody becomes significantly more ornate, giving the music an anxious character. Through the exploration of different performances of this section, several approaches to emphasizing its apprehensive nature can be identified. The first performance is that of Arnold Jacobs himself, who very

deliberately follows the exact articulation and dynamics notated by Vaughan Williams.[120] Jacobs creates tension by accelerating slightly through the quick rhythmic passages, particularly those in measures 40—42 that lead into the key change. In contrast, Patrick Harrild chooses an overall slower tempo and applies rubato to all of the technical passages.[121] For example, Harrild accelerates through the first set of sextuplets in measure 41, then slows during the second, meanwhile exaggerating the dynamic swell. This ebb and flow effect creates a feeling of angst and indecision. Rather than utilize rubato, Øystein Baadsvik performs at on overall faster tempo and keeps strict time in his performance, creating contrast by exaggerating the written articulations.[122] He shortens all the articulated notes so that they are clearly distinguished from the slurred and legato articulations, giving new energy to the passage. Rather than intensify by dynamic swells, he instead utilizes liberal vibrato on long durations, which combined with the contrasting articulations gives the section a clear sense of motion.

The second significant event occurs from measures 58 to 69 with the return of the A section, which clearly marks the climax of the movement (Example 2). Both soloist and accompaniment are marked at fortissimo, their loudest dynamic in the entire movement. This fortissimo is approached by a dramatic and drastic five bar crescendo from piano in measure 58. At the height of the crescendo, Vaughan Williams extends the phrase by four measures, adding extra emphasis to the peak of the crescendo through augmentation. But this climax is relatively short lived with an extreme and sudden one-

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[120] Arnold Jacobs, "Romanza." *The Chicago Principal: First Chair Soloists Play Famous Concertos* [1977] (New York: Universal Class Group, 2003) CD-ROM.
[121] Patrick Harrild, "Romanza," *Vaughan Williams: Symphony no. 6 and Bass Tuba Concerto* (Colchester, United Kingdom: Chandos Records, 1992) CD-ROM.
[122] Øystein Baadsvik, "Romanza," *20th Century Tuba Concertos* (Åkersberga, Sweden: BIS Records, 2008) CD-ROM.

bar descrescendo to piano in measure 64 by both the orchestra and accompaniment. The texture continues to thin until the soloist is playing completely unaccompanied in measure 66.

All three soloists recognize this moment as the climax of the movement, but emphasize and manage it differently. Jacobs dramatizes this peak through his articulation, agogically accenting the downbeat of each measure and playing any articulated note in marcato style. In conjunction with the dynamic swell, this treatment creates an aggressive tone that sets the section apart from the rest of the movement. For his part, Harrild executes an extended ritardando as he crescendos, prolonging the climax even longer than Vaughan Williams notated. He slows to such an extent that the unaccompanied phrase ending is completely out of time and treated more like a small cadenza. Baadsvik executes a similar treatment but to a lesser extent, slowing slightly throughout the crescendo and utilizing rubato in the unaccompanied measure. Baadsvik creates drama primarily through dynamics, saving the majority of the crescendo for measures 61 and 62, the final two measures before the peak. The orchestral accompaniment crescendos in conjunction with Baadsvik, acting as equals with the soloist and practically overtaking his sound at the height of the crescendo. Baadsvik once again utilizes liberal vibrato on notes of longer duration, emphasizing the vocal nature of the movement.

The last substantial narrative moment occurs at the end of the movement in measures 75—79 (Example 3). At this point in the opening A section the soloist transitions into D minor for the subsequent B section. In measure 75, the tuba attempts to move to D minor through its introduction of F-natural, but the accompaniment

indecisively undulates between F-natural and F-sharp, obscuring the tonal center. Three measures are added to the form at the end of this A' section as the accompaniment withdraws and leaves the unaccompanied soloist alone trying to establish D minor. Finally, the tuba settles on an A, the rather ambiguous fifth of either chord, and the accompaniment joins on a decisively D major chord. The soloist is trying to return to D minor and begin the cycle of the form again, but the accompaniment draws the movement to a close by insisting on remaining in D major.

Once again, all three soloists seem to understand the significance of the F-natural in the narrative, but dramatize the note through different treatments. Jacobs articulates the F-natural harder than the surrounding notes, accenting the note through weight. Harrild begins to rallentando much sooner than notated on the score, highlighting the insistence on D minor through prolongation. Baadsvik lingers on the F-natural, using rubato and nuance to highlight the tonal shift.

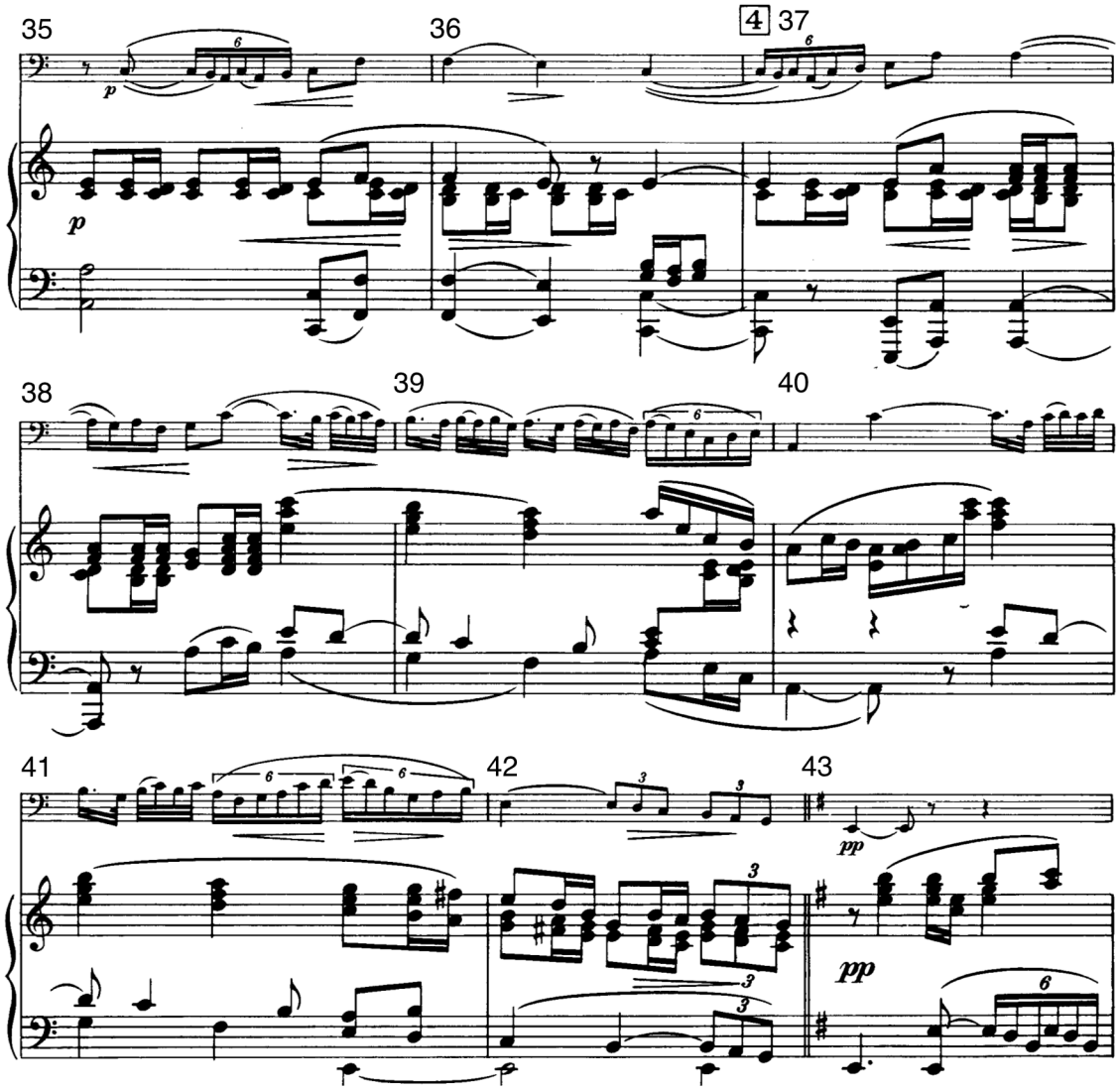
Baadsvik, Jacobs, and Harrild give strikingly different interpretations of Vaughan Williams's "Romanza," but they all respect and operate within the parameters set forth by the composer. All three performers recognize the plot archetype and structure of the story set by the score itself, but each brings a unique perspective to the music. Jacobs creates drama primarily through harder, marcato articulations, creating an aggressive, temperamental mood. Harrild is less extreme and utilizes ritardandos and rubatos in his interpretation, bringing a more reserved, yet tormented temperament to the movement. Baadsik utilizes liberal amounts of vibrato and contrast, highlighting the heightened emotions that define the romanza genre so well. Each performer interprets the discourse

displayed in the piece differently, creating notably different moods for the exact same music.

Music's framework dictates educated musical choices for the performer. Elements such as articulation, rubato, vibrato, and dynamics are at the performer's disposal to highlight structural elements in the music. Through different combinations of these elements, performers create musical performance filled with the nuance, clarity, and motion that are necessary for narrative interpretation. For music students, listening and comparing these elements in both recorded and live performances provides a critical step in learning to utilize these elements for themselves. By recognizing effective musical performances given by others, students can choose elements to implement in their own performance. In the case of Vaughan Williams's "Romanza," a student may choose to play with the rubato of Harrild at the B section, but the dynamics and vibrato of Baadsvik at the climax of the movement. In addition, teachers can encourage students to make their own educated musical choices by guiding them through the analytical process described above. Students should analyze the structure of the piece, consider the structure's narrative implications, and then choose musical techniques to highlight those implications. By making educated decisions based on the form of the piece and by what they find most effective in the performance of others, a student can selectively choose what to utilize in their own performance, thereby enriching as well as establishing their own unique musical voice.

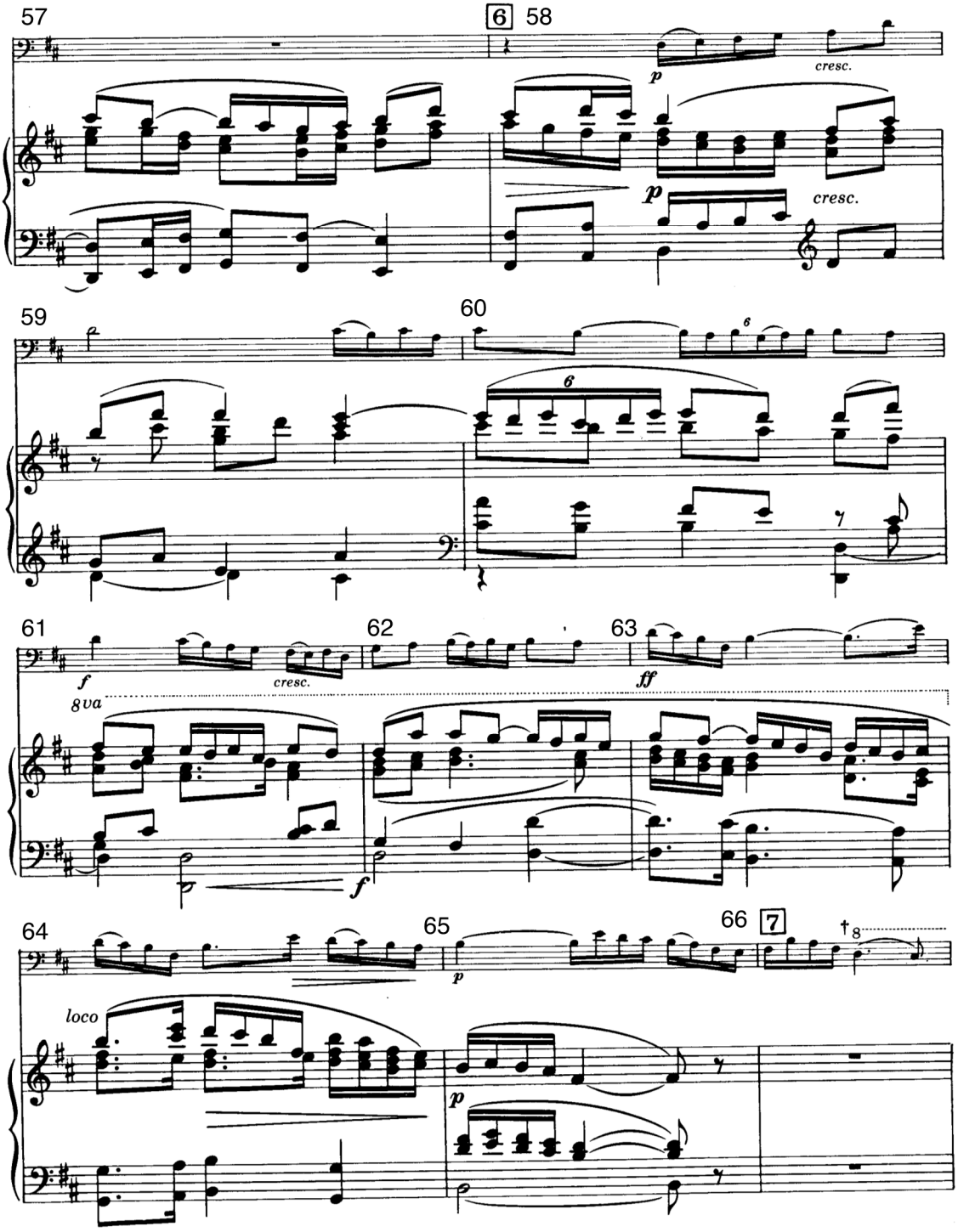
Music Examples

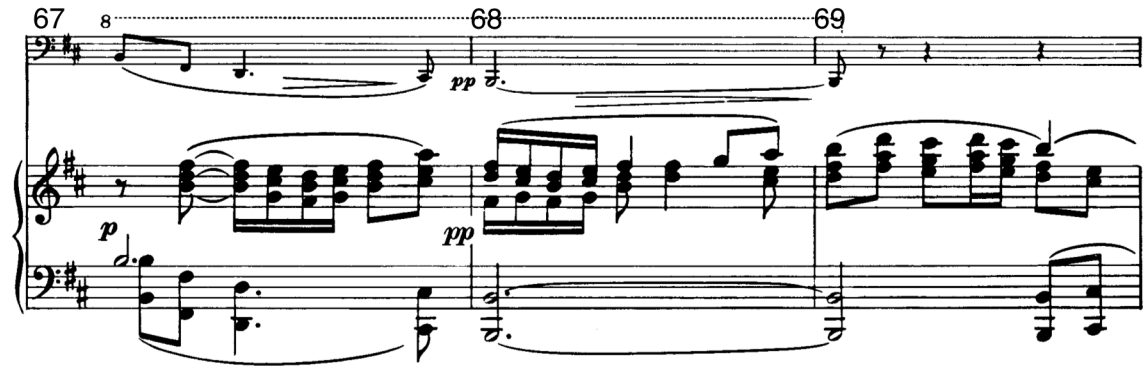
Example 1. Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra, mm. 35—43



Source: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra (Oxford University Press, 1955).

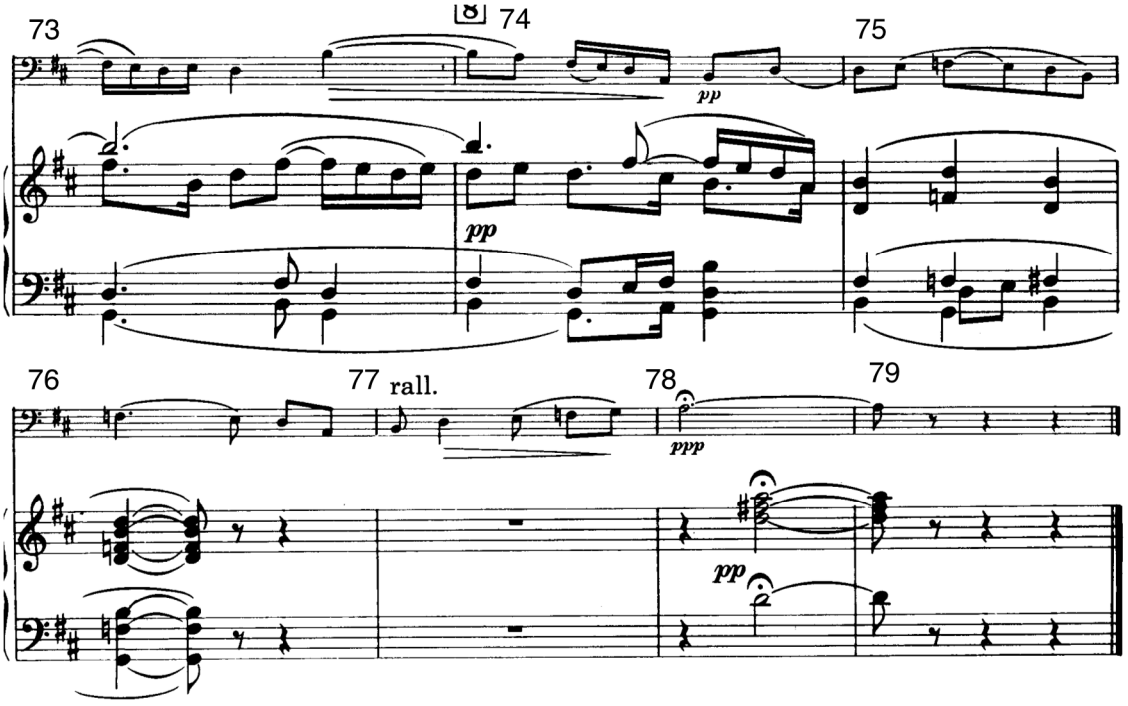
Example 2. Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra, mm. 57—69





Source: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra (Oxford University Press, 1955).

Example 3. Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra, mm. 73—79



Source: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra (Oxford University Press, 1955).

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